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ANTIQUE FURNITURE.

IN so far as the term "Antique Furnishing" is understood to comprise *fac similes* of the pieces of furniture, or the style of decorations used by the ancients, it is improper. But so far as the ornamentation of the different epochs of art may be applied to modern uses, and to the furniture of our days, the term, although somewhat misleading, is proper. Thus we have the Egyptian or Roman or Grecian or Pompeian dining-room, although the fittings of such an apartment among those people would hardly meet the requirements of modern use. We have a Renaissance dining-room, with luxurious chairs and an extension table, and beautifully stained glass windows, while, as a matter of fact, the dinners of those days were usually eaten from a very ordinary table, without knives or forks, the diners sitting on uncomfortable seats, and with windows of miserable, semi-opaque glass, if any glass at all, made in small bits, because they didn't know how to make large sheets.

We have, however, in our days, such a passion

the plate furnishes a suggestion, and in color to harmonize with the wall.

The sideboard on opposite page, is in the same style of wood and decoration; the mirror and glass in doors, with beveled edges; the cove lined with stamped leather. It is hardly necessary to say that the carvings should be in the same style of ornament as those of the wainscoting and remainder of the room.

TWO NEW FRESCO SYSTEMS.

From THE ARTIST.

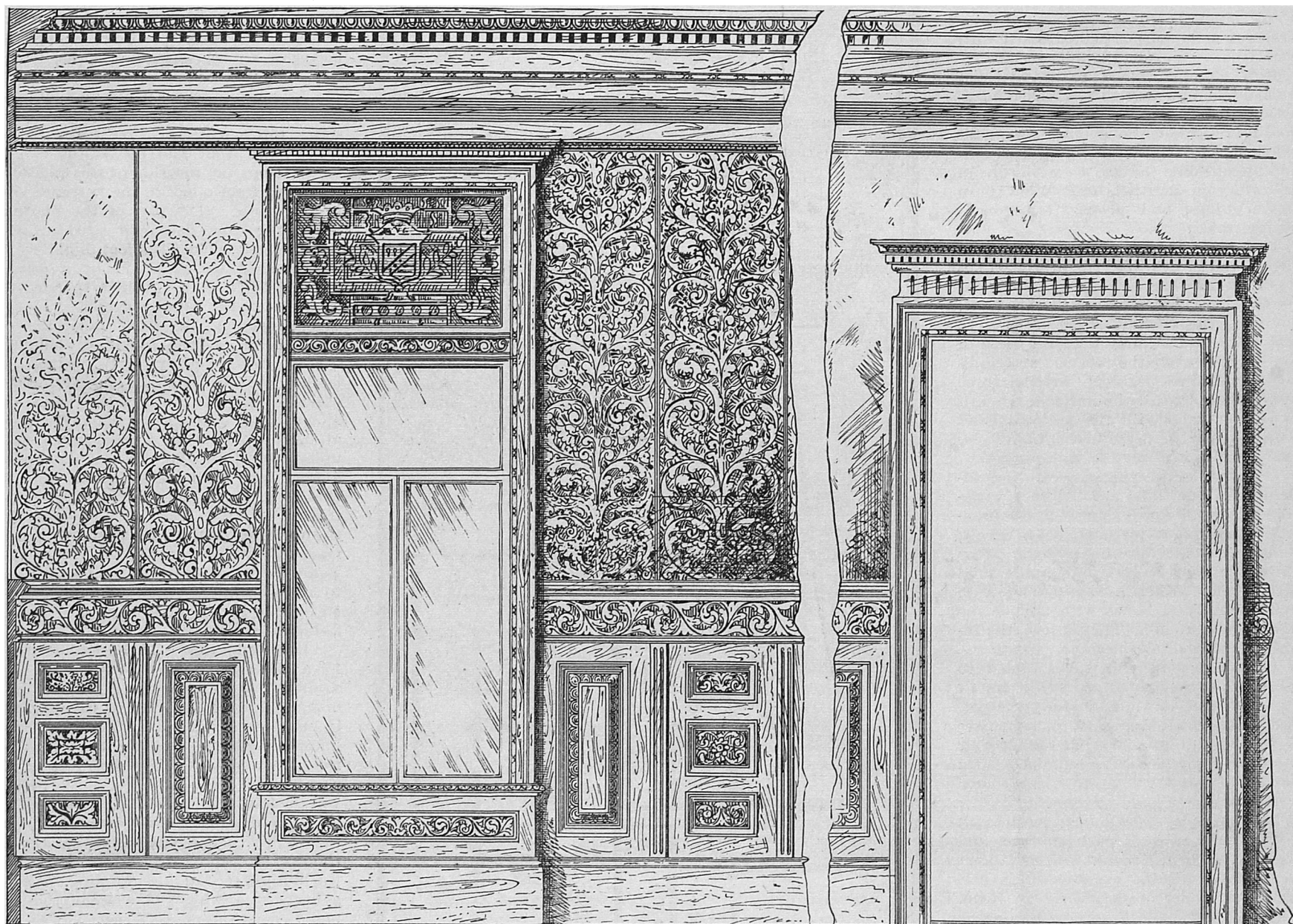
Two systems of alleged indestructible fresco are reported from the Continent. The first is that of Herr Hansen, the Austrian artist who is decorating in polychrome the Vienna House of Parliament, and is put forward as a rediscovery of the Pompeian method, arrived at chiefly by observation at Pompeii. In this we read:

"The surface of the wall is first covered with ordinary stucco, and then a thin layer of marble-dust of the colors required for the background is

The system, founded upon the stereo-chromatic method of Schlotthauer and his fellow-workers, embodies improvements in the fundamental ground and the painting ground, in the preparation of the colors and the concluding fixing of the picture. We give the description of these improvements in the form published, which, however seems occasionally obscure:

"*The Wall Ground.*—The wall or fundamental ground is, in some respects, the same as that employed in the stereo-chromatic process, being a mortar composed of slaked lime, sand and water, which after drying, is flattened with rough sandstone, and afterwards impregnated with soluble silicate of potash. Before applying this mortar it is necessary, in new buildings, that the walling should be perfectly dried; while in older buildings, the part of the wall intended to be treated should be laid bare to the stone, and the commissures scraped out.

"*The Painting Ground.*—This consists, in the new process, of a mixture of four parts (by measure) of quartz sand, three and a half parts of marble sand, half part of fossil meal, and one part of quicklime, which is stirred up



PART SIDE OF DINING ROOM INTERIOR.

for the "antique," and quite proper it is too, that we are all quite willing to overlook the absurdity of the application of the term to our modern surroundings, and a large and most profitable business is done by those who specially cater to this taste. Mr. JAMES THOMSON, of Boston, one of these specialists, has made for us a set of original designs for an antique dining-room, comprising one side of the room, and six pieces of furniture, two plates of which are given in this number, and the remainder will be given next month.

The design is in the style of the Renaissance. The plate on this page is part of the side of the room showing a window, a door, the wainscoting, the wall and the cornice. The wood work should all be in oak, carved rather roughly, direct from the chisel of the workman, without being sand-papered, and should be stained brown. The panels, borders, etc., should be in conventionalized designs in good relief. The walls covered with embossed leather, or in stamped paper in gold and colors imitating leathers, and should be divided into panels by small but distinct moldings. The stained glass sash should be in a medieval design, of which

laid on like ordinary stucco lustro, and is rubbed smooth. Upon this the ornaments and figures are then drawn in the usual fresco colors, rubbed in with a little soap. Finally the whole is rubbed over with a smooth piece of hot iron, and the work is complete. By this process the paintings become intimately united with, and are in fact all of a piece with the sub-stratum, forming an integral part of the plastic mass."

The second method to which we draw attention consists of certain improvements by Herr Keim, of Munich, in the already known stereo-chromatic process. For the merits of this is given a cogent voucher, being the report just issued, of a committee appointed last spring by the Royal Bavarian Academy of Arts at Munich for the purpose of investigating the merits of the system. The report states, in effect, that the problem of rendering wall-paintings indestructible by climatic action has been solved by Herr Keim; and when the merits of the system are fully known, the committee believe that an important change is likely to take place in mural painting, monumental and decorative.

with distilled water. The mass thus produced is strengthened by the admixture of carbonate of lime in the crystalline form of marble sand, which, from its rough and porous nature, readily absorbs the colors which are subsequently applied. The addition of silicic acid, finely decomposed in the form of fossil meal, promotes the formation of silicate of lime, and thereby increases the hardness of the material and its capacity to resist chemical and mechanical influences of a trying character.

"*The Colors.*—After being thoroughly dried, this painting ground is saturated with silicic fluor acid, which destroys any crystalline particles of carbonate of lime which may be on the surface, and opens the pores of the material for the absorption of the colors to be laid on. According to the stereo-chromatic process the colors are only laid on with water, but by Herr Keim's system each color receives in its preparation a certain admixture of a nature suited to its special properties, which is intended to promote the solidity and durability of work.

"In order to prevent the darkening or the lightening in the shade of certain tones of color, which is sometimes produced by the final applica-

tion of the soluble glass used for the purpose of fixing, the colors receive before use an admixture of potash or ammonia. By this means they do not alter in shade, and the painter is saved the trouble of calculating what shade the color he is applying will be after it is subjected to the process of fixing. The colors are delivered by the factory (including the larger American paint factories.—ED.) almost ready for use; only requiring to be rendered thinner according to circumstances by the addition of water.

"*Fixing.*—The fixing of the completed picture is finally done by a wash of soluble glass containing an admixture of caustic potash and caustic ammonia. This is not applied cold, but warm, to the wall surface, which has previously been dried to the stone. When the weather is cold or damp, this drying is promoted by a specially constructed iron stove. To complete the process and to prevent the subsequent appearance of the alkali, which becomes free in the form of a white dusty coating, the fixed picture is again treated with carbonate of ammonia. For subsequent cleaning, washing with water is sufficient."

It is stated as an illustration of the weather-resisting properties of wall paintings executed

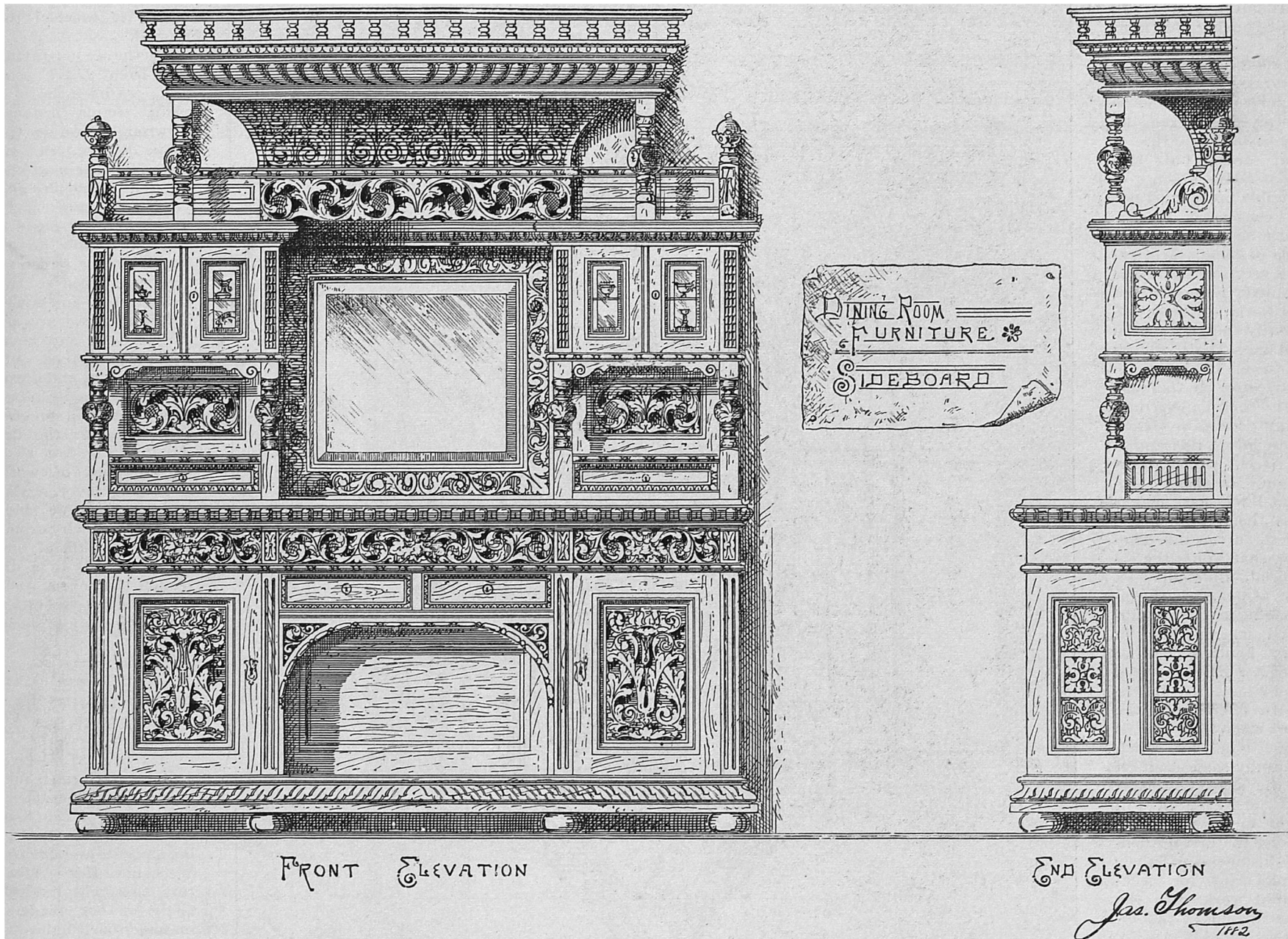
THE FUTURE OF GAS.

GAS is an institution of the utmost value to the artizan; it requires hardly any attention, is supplied upon regulated terms, and gives with what should be a cheerful light a genial warmth, which often saves the lighting of a fire. The time is moreover, not far distant, I venture to think, when both rich and poor will largely resort to gas as the most convenient, the cleanest, and the cheapest of heating agents, and when raw coal will be seen only at the colliery or the gas works. In all cases where the town to be supplied is within say thirty miles of the colliery, the gas works may with advantage be planted at the mouth, or still better at the bottom of the pit, whereby all haulage of fuel would be avoided, and the gas, in its ascent from the bottom of the colliery, would acquire an onward pressure sufficient probably to impel it to its destination. The possibility of transporting combustible gas through pipes for such a distance has been proved at Pittsburgh, where natural gas from the oil district is used in large quantities.

The quasi monopoly so long enjoyed by gas

Conventional styles in wall paper have become tiresome, and novelties are looked for. Panels, each distinct from the other, are favored. Light colors are coming in, and floral designs are preferred. Gold, either in the ground or figures, is not favored. Tapestry paper, colored and in raised velvet, is selling largely. A novelty in French papers are those representing submarine objects on a ground the color of the sea. Hangings of the Venetian order, producing the effect of beaten gold and bronzes, are numbered with fine papers, as are the raised flock papers giving figures in relief. These last-named papers are much employed for dining-rooms and hotels. When hand-painted, after being hung, these present from the wall the appearance of carved wood. Leather papers, for which there is more or less demand, come in old bronze, oxidized metal and beaten gold patterns. Ceiling decorations are exceedingly popular. These may harmonize with the wall-hangings. They may be an agreeable contrast or the same tones of color represented on walls may be carried out in lighter shades. American wall papers in the medium qualities are to be preferred to those of the same price of French manufacture, the purchaser obtaining more display for his money.

The frescoer is one of the first of artists who is and must be abreast the times; his work has that peculiar and distinctive prominence that makes it often the most observed of all embellishments, and if 'tis well done the ques-



according to the Keim system, that such a picture was buried during the whole winter of 1880 in the snow under a gutter, without the slightest injury resulting. The committee to which allusion has been made has further established the fact that the placing in hot or cold water, and the application with brushes of water, alkalies, diluted and even concentrated acids, produced no injurious effects worth naming, and the pictures thus experimented upon continued after these tests to display hardness and imperviousness to mechanical influences.

Apart from these properties of resistance to the effects of climate, the clear white painting ground, it is said, shows up the colors, particularly ultramarine shades, in a bright and effective manner. The paints are easily applied and blend well together; the production of a pleasing and harmonious effect being facilitated in many ways by the process of Herr Keim.

The imitation of tapestries is fashionable. "Inlaid appliqué" is made by tracing the same pattern on differently colored materials, cutting them carefully out and inseting each into the other, so as not to have any one entirely of one color.

companies has had the inevitable effect of checking progress. The gas being supplied by meter, it has been seemingly to the advantage of the companies to give merely the illuminating power, and to discourage the invention of economical burners, in order that the consumption might reach a maximum. The application of gas for heating purposes has not been encouraged, and is still made difficult, in consequence of the objectionable practice of reducing the pressure in the mains during day-time to the lowest possible point consistent with prevention of atmospheric indraught. The introduction of electric light has convinced gas managers and directors that such a policy is no longer tenable, but must give way to one of technical progress; new processes for cheapening the production and increasing the purity and illuminating power of gas are being fully discussed before the Gas Institute; and improved burners, rivaling the electric light in brilliancy, greet our eyes as we pass along our principal thoroughfares.—C. WILLIAM SIEMENS, F.R.S., in *Popular Science Monthly* for December.

Antique Daghestan rugs range from \$300 to \$1,600.

tion—Who did it?—naturally follows the first feelings of admiration. Ceiling decoration has always been, more or less, a means of instruction, but this instruction has had a tendency in the direction of mythology, and walls and ceilings have been elaborated with Venuses and Cupids, and even Jupiters and Junos, until the student has become thoroughly acquainted with at least the fresco attributes of these characters. A new departure has been recently taken in Manchester, England, we find, and the ceiling of the Town Hall is being painted by Madox Brown with a representation of Mr. Crabtree, the Manchester astronomer, watching the transit of Venus with the apparatus of his own devising. The conception and workmanship is said to be admirable, and it is certainly a step in the direction of perpetuating local matters that would be likely to meet favor in the United States to the detriment, perhaps, of Hercules and Apollo and other parties of that class.

A strip of black satin embroidered with some pretty floral device, makes a rich wall panel. If this is supplemented at top and bottom, with bands of crimson or copper color, it adds much to the beauty. A silken cord may be used to suspend it, and balls of silk might be attached to its lower end. The decoration of the panel can, of course, be varied as the taste of the artist may suggest. Birds, figures, landscapes, and other appropriate things could be substituted for the flowers.